

- 1) Globally ports are the gateway for the entry of merchandise and also acts as a exit point. Ports play a vital role in the development of trade and economic growth.

Scenario in India

India has 12 major and more than 200 minor ports with a cargo capacity of 1,065 MMT and 700 MMT. But India is far behind other Asian countries like Singapore, Malaysia in container shipping. India has ranked 35 out of 160 countries in Global Development Index released by World Bank.

Govt initiatives :

Realising the importance of ports Government has taken various initiatives like

→ Allowing 100% FDI in shipping and 100% private sector participation.

→ The introduction of "Maritime Agenda 2010-2020" include,

* Increasing India's share of trade from 1% to 5%.

* Raising the standard of ports at par with other international players.

Sagarmatha project :-

→ The main goals include

→ modernising ports

→ Linking port and industries

→ coastal community development.

→ India has recognised 5 Inland waterways as National waterways.

Green initiatives :

Providing funds for infrastructure and combating oil pollution. Setting up of 200 MW of wind mill and solar power panel near ports.

→ Ministry of shipping and Tourism

Directorate of lighthouse development has come up with a proposal to set up 78 lighthouses for the purpose of tourism.

Project Unnati

To propose initiatives and identifying key areas for the development of ports.

So far 36 initiatives has implemented out of 112.

Determinants in development :

→ There is no development of roads and railways which connect the ports.

- The turnaround time in Indian courts are 2 days which is much longer.
- The private players are under strict limitations regarding the type of cargos to be handled.
- Indian ports are very small to handle the cargos.
- Longer time for the inspection of cargo ships and vessels.

Way forward:-

- Easing regulation for enhancing the competitive spirit.
- Providing hinterland connectivity
- Undertaking dredging activities and inviting international players in it.

Vijay Kelkar committee recommended the reduction of stamp duties, tariff controls etc.

Conclusion :

With a longest coastline India has a huge potential to explore the resources by improving the port infrastructure. It is important to note that in an open economy one cannot neglect the importance of ports it can play.